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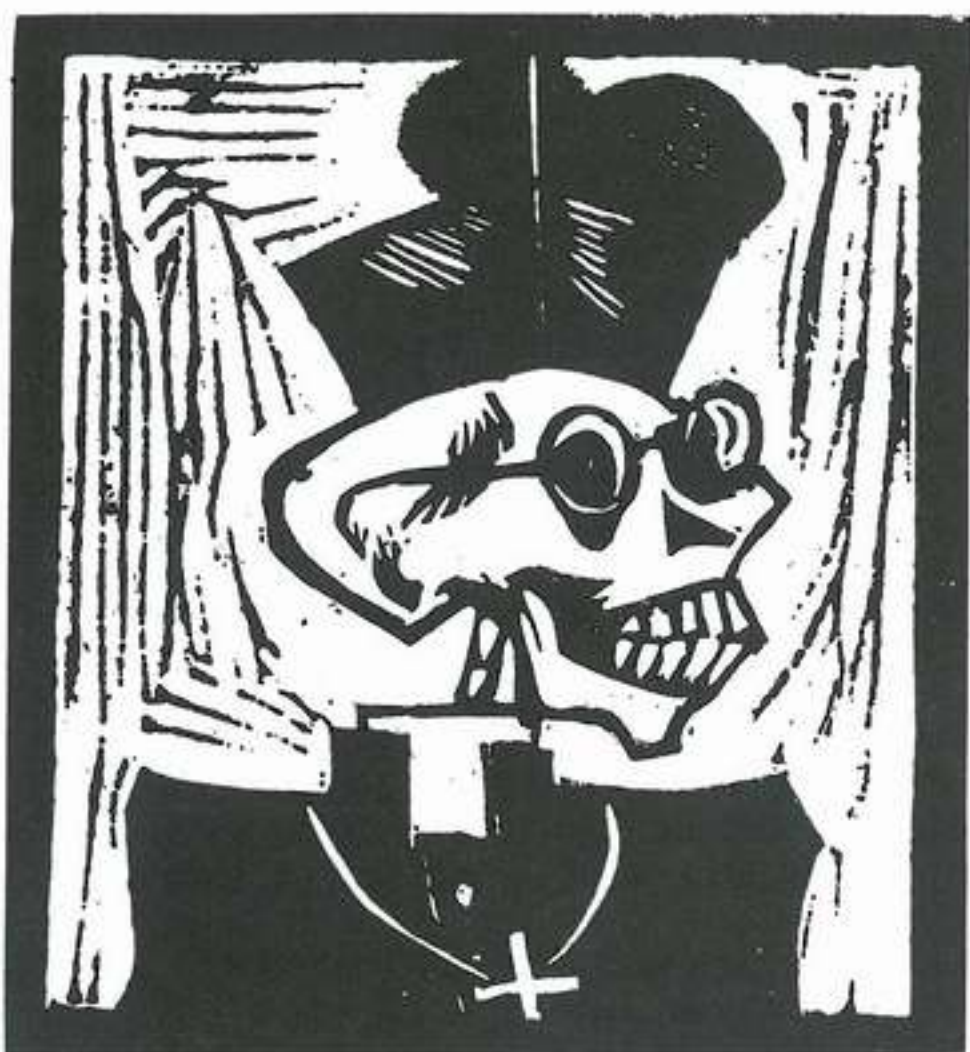
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Vol. 9 No. 12

**THE
VOICE
OF THE
WORKER**

'That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic ...' James Connolly

A CARDINAL CRIME



THE FEELEY AFFAIR



THE LABOUR CONFERENCE

LABOUR



'80

MICHAEL FOOT IN DUBLIN

by KEVIN O'CONNOR

On a Sunday afternoon in October, Michael Foot, former Leader of the House of Commons, gave an address, the Dean Swift Memorial Lecture, in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. The following day, he announced he would be a candidate for the leadership of the British Labour Party, a position subsequently attained. Kevin O'Connor attended the lecture:

Michael Foot on his feet for longer than he wished, peering through thick-lensed spectacles, up and down the awning cathedral, swaying in the manner of an abstracted don, peering up at the remnants of tattered wars - the disintegrating battle standards of Irish regiments that served the Union. Under one of those dais things he swayed through the past and future in the company of corpulent clerics, abstracted from the droning of Evensong and the purple cushions.

Nowhere else must the twilight of Empire have seemed so caught, the mediocrity of the setting with the tombs of Barons, Planters and Men-at-Arms in the side ducts, the imperial helmets along the altar side. Cast in cold marble, the replicas of battle scenes from the sub-continent, ennobled in effusive and ponderous language - but in modern slang, flogging the wogs with a vengeance. Westminster Abbey will seem like this, when the Megaton or the socialists freeze it.

God our Help in Ages Past... God and the Sword and lists of battle honours. Generals and Commanders names first, then the declension through the ranks, 2nd and 1st Lieutenants by name too... Fitzharris and Doran and Cowley... onto '43 Drummers and 87 Privateers...' Anonymous, they had the pack-drill all right but when it came to the plaques, no room in the cathedral.

And one Captain now, mounting the pulpit, or at least one who could in time be the Queen's Chief Messenger - to pay homage to The Dean Swift in his Dane's land, under the flags. Forever 'The Dane' to the people around here, the ghosts who made up the Dublin fusileers: who have earned a plaque here, too.

'Foot must think he has died and is in hell', said the historian beside me as the then Deputy Leader of the British Labour Party ascended under the tatters of regimental standards into the pulpit of a familiar church in an alien country. The slanting high light from high-up caught him as he blinked out over the congregation of the post-Imperial Irish, gathered by dint of an announcement on the News At One that the contender for the leadership of his party would be in Dublin's St. Patrick's Cathedral to talk about Swift.

He might indeed have thought so, for he began by nodding to the reclining tombs and saying that it was his first time speaking in a cathedral - 'and probably my last'. In further delineation of his context, marking his phrase: 'I have no religious convictions.' Careful to use neither 'agnostic' nor 'atheist'.

And so into his panegyric for Swift, the clear enunciation of the former Leader of the House of Commons ringing out over much less common attendance here. The cathedral crammed on all its aisles, ducts, dais and seats. The normally sparse congregation swelled out with the curious and the cosmopolitan, the long-nosed Irish Protestants looking like the true inheritors of the conquistadores, now crammed-out and squashed-in by the true descendants of the colonised.

Among the congregation: one senior active republican, several splinter republicans, two professors of literature, a head of music with a French government decoration, a

malady of media monitors, an aspirant of academics and a sally of suburbans in from Stillorgan, Foxrock and Blanchardstown. Oh, and a flutter of Fleet Street journalists, tired-looking from following the flitting Foot around: London, Scotland, Dublin in the last few days. Leaning against pillars, yawning under the awnings, they hope for an announcement or an assassination to wake them up...

Indeed you could have cracked the tension coming in, with the plain people admitted in bunches of thirty at a time, then the heavy garrison doors closed again while security gazes perused them from inside, through little square siege-windows in the doors. Then another lot let in, passing a bulky bodyguard whose shape has an interesting geometric outline from the points of the sub-machine underneath his anorak.

There's a cluster of his colleagues at the back, too, and what an orchestration it would make if their hardware clattered onto the flags during one of the silences in the service.

Instead, there's a ripple of response running through his audience as Foot makes a few warm-up political jokes. He had been pleased to see a reference to 'Denis - the human touch' - in the *Sunday Post*. He meant the *Sunday Press*. Made him feel quite at home, it did, until he realised it was neither one of those Denises... (The reference, in fact, was to the Fianna Fail T.D. Denis Gallagher).

Swift, he says, was a great Irishman, a great journalist, a great humanitarian. He was a great Irishman because from here he had challenged Britain and the world, with erudition and learning. He was a great journalist, possibly even the greatest journalist, according to Denis Johnson, said Foot, adding that Dalkey man's book 'may come to be regarded as the best of the reasonable books written about Swift'.

As for the allegations of Swift's own unreason, as for that, said Foot, working himself up into a bit of a rage, as for that - well modern scholarship had destroyed utterly the allegations of Swift's madness. Just not true, no matter that it had been put about for years, even by that other Dr. Johnson, who was, said Foot with menace in his voice, a confirmed Tory.

Come to that, and it had come to that, and he wished to score no political point by saying so, but it was a fact, yes indeed a fact, that Swift's rehabilitation in that regard owed its restoration to the radical left. It was the modern radical left who had unearthed the evidence, who had done the research to dis-assemble the theories of madness. Aye - and let that be remembered said Foot, wagging his finger and giving us a touch of the manic himself, with his eyes popping and his mane of white hair wagging above the pulpit.

It wasn't difficult then, during that admonition, to see the tradition from which Foot himself had sprung, going all the way back to the coffee-houses of Dr Johnson's Fleet Street and The Strand and Whitehall. During the time when the good Dr. Swift was a perambulating figure of intrigue among the houses and ante-chambers, along

THE FEELEY AFFAIR

The Limerick Socialist reported in August on the Pat Feeley affair. It was a remarkable case. Pat Feeley seems to have had ranged against him political and financial pressure groups as well as some members of S.F.W.P. Strange bedfellows!

Pat Feeley is known to be a hard-working and progressive individual and his radio programmes over the years have championed various minority causes and groups.

One of his documentaries dealt with the expulsion of the Jews from Limerick. The programme on the garage mechanics was an expose of working conditions in a Co. Kerry garage.

That it sparked off a conspiracy to get him can hardly be in doubt. What's not so well known are all the ramifications of this plot. Probably the full tale is known only to Feeley himself, who has yet to divulge the whole story, and to those who organised it.

However, the investigation into his personal and political life is known to Dublin journalists and was published in part in the *Sunday World* and *Hibernia*. It ran something like this: a tribunal in R.T.E., made up of the deputy director-general, the head of personnel and the controller of R.T.E. 2 (television), hired a private detective. They did not hire the detective themselves but did so through a retired garda official, Michael P. Sutton, a liaison officer with Chubb Alarms. He hired a detective called John Vaughan, who works out of his own house at 11, Acorn Road, Dundrum. Vaughan, as detectives often do, arranged with guards to do the digging for him. He

contacted two police men in the traffic corps in Tralee garda station. These were, Michael Fitzgerald and Tom Golden, both with addresses at Riverside Drive, Castleisland, where the garage in Feeley's programme was located. Fitzgerald, in turn, requested another guard, a Sergeant Keenan of Brosna, to carry out local enquiries. Pat Feeley's mother lives in West Limerick close to the Kerry border and only a few miles from Brosna.

Michael Fitzgerald's findings were passed on to Vaughan, including the result of Keenan's work.

There is a standing directive from the Garda Commissioner forbidding guards to hire themselves out to private investigators in their spare time. This, however, does not stop them doing it.

In this case they were involved in investigating someone in the media and they were found out and exposed. The manner in which the ring of intrigue was broken is, it seems, an amazing story in its own right.

In June there were two Dail questions on the case. Michael Keating and John Horgan asked the Minister for Justice, Gerry Collins, about the hiring of gardai by Vaughan. An enquiry was carried out by the garda authorities, who duly covered up for the gardai involved. Gerry Collins was able to tell Michael Keating and John Horgan, subsequently, that an investigation had failed to substantiate the allegations. Needless to say, this cheap prostitution of the police force by individual members does little to win respect for the gardai as a whole.

the couple of ambling miles of London streets wherein England was ruled - and perforce much of the known world at the time.

It was a large world then, the ink-stain colonial red to run even larger, and run by a small number of plotters in the coffee-houses around The Strand and St. James's, the extremities of the territory bounded by The Palace and one end and the printing-houses at the other. The tension between politics and the press as we know it to-day can be seen in high-point in the tension of intrigue then between The Palace and the printing-houses, exemplified in the person of Dean Swift during his London years.

A career paralleled in some respects by the weaving man now in the pulpit of St. Patrick's, for Foot in his own time was not only one of the youngest editors of Fleet Street's most influential evening paper, the *London Evening Standard*, but was later to become one of the most powerful voices in the conscience of British Labour over the whole post-war period.

Now in the church which is more sacred to English intellectuals than the Irish can ever appreciate, talking of the cleric who is more an Irish patriot than the English can ever appreciate. "Swift is the founder of Irish independence - nobody has so clearly set out the reasons for that independence," says Foot and the visiting journalists wake up and look around. If a bomb is to be thrown or a H-Block banner unfurled, now is the moment...

"... nobody has so clearly set-out the reasons for that independence and certainly nobody has set them out in better English," admonishes Foot. The historian beside me says: "True on both counts. Swift pre-dates Tone. And Swift's English was better..."

The man in the pulpit continues to admonish. "Swift hated cruelty, more particularly, he hated the cruelty in-

voked when one nation assumes the right of government over another." The reporters are fraying across their notebooks. In the pew ahead, a hung-over English scribe searches to produce a grubby back of an envelope. Are we about to hear a Declaration on Ireland from the next possible Prime Minister of England?

No!

The politician does a dovetail behind the scholar as Foot elongates Swift's defence of the Irish into defence of humanity in general. Switching his spectacles as he had switched tack, the parliamentarian who in his own good time kept his beloved Commons in the same order as Cromwell once did, says of Swift: "His love of Irish independence lay at the root of his love of humanity."

Then sensing the gap of expectancy, Foot fills it with a populist gesture of advice, coyly noting that elections are imminent in America and in Britain: "The best advice I could give anyone standing for political office is that they do a compulsory examination in *Gulliver's Travels*". And descends from his purple hue to resume his place on the dais under the imperial helmets.

Hearing him finished, that moment of the congregation who had come only to hear him began to fritter away, past the baroque monuments and under the dangling regimental flags which now seem to have regained some of their symbolism. Within minutes only the regular worshippers are left with their prayer-books and the tail-end of Evensong.

"Did you know", said the historian, "that Swift wrote a book 'Directions to Servants' - and went off down through the banged-about liberties. What direction in relation to Ireland Michael Foot may in time take from his Dean remains to be seen."

DR. LONG WRITES HIS OWN HISTORY of the LIMERICK MEDICAL MISSION

THE DR. LONG STORY

PART SEVENTEEN

JOHN LIDDY — AN INTERESTING DIGRESSION

A Romanist and an ardent politician, John Liddy often spoke at local political meetings. Espousing the cause of Parnell, he found himself in opposition to the local magnate, the parish priest. As Assistant Clerk to the Union he attended the funeral of the Dispensary doctor, who happened to be a Protestant. Not only did he attend the funeral, but he was guilty of going inside the Protestant Church and listening to the service. Looking all around him for the statue of the devil which he had been told always adorned Protestant places of worship, he could find nothing answering to that description. He was surprised to see no statues of any kind, and to find that Protestants worshipped God after all. The Service was all strange to him, but one feature arrested his attention. The clergyman read in English: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout. Not liking to display his ignorance, the young man repressed his inclination to ask his neighbour in the pew where these words came from. He had never read the New Testament, and thought the words sounded like a prayer. The impression left on his mind was that Protestants were great people to write such beautiful prayers.

The next time John Liddy went to Confession he made no mention of the funeral. After enumerating the usual catalogue of sins, he was asked by the priest "Is that all?" "Yes, that is all". "But were you not at the doctor's funeral?" "I was, but that is not a sin". "Ah, but did you not attend the Service?" "I did, but that is not a sin"... Perceiving that the penitent had a mind of his own, the priest finally said: "I do not want to deal hardly with you; I'll give you a week to think it over. Come back in a week's time and I'll deal with you".

The week passed. But think of the affair as he would, our friend could not persuade himself that he had sinned. So back he went, resolved not to confess. "I knew you would think better of it", said the priest, "you are a good boy; I'm glad you came back". "Oh", was the reply, "I have come back all right, but not to confess". "What! not to confess?" "My conscience accuses me of no sin, and I will not confess"... Then the storm broke. The thought of anyone keeping a private conscience in opposition to his will was too much for the priest. He rushed at the culprit, dragged him from the sacred precincts, and literally kicked him out of the Church...

Thus does Romanism sometimes over-reach itself and repel those who would otherwise be good subjects. Three years of barrenness followed, during which unbelief took possession of an embittered soul. No word of warning or exhortation came from the priest; though he knew that the man was in mortal sin, he never made any effort to bring him to a better frame of mind. The Roman priest can tolerate a fair amount of scepticism, so long as it remains passive. It is overt action such as becoming a Protestant that is resented. Rome is certainly consistent on this point. A man may seldom or never go to Mass; yet, so long as he remains nominally a Roman Catholic, the public conscience will be fairly satisfied. But let him take a definite step and pledge his allegiance elsewhere, and immediately the fury of the Church will know no bounds. In the same way the Church that will do little or nothing for the child in the street will spare no effort and grudge no expense to get a hold of the child once it has been placed in a Protestant institution. Dr. Barnardo and

many others have borne abundant testimony to this effect.

About this time the people were being stirred up to crush the Limerick Medical Mission. One of the methods invoked by the Church of the majority was the boycott. No jarvey would drive the doctor, and a dispute arose in which Dr. Long had no other course open to him but to vindicate his rights as a citizen in the Civil Courts. The Church of Rome believes in the virtue of proselytism, but it is a virtue of which she claims to possess the monopoly. For anyone else to attempt to proselytise is wrong and must be condemned and punished. When Dr. Long gained the victory over priestly tyranny he received a letter of congratulation from the hero of this story. In his reply, Dr. Long pointed out that there was a greater victory, the victory over sin. Dr. Long's assistant began to visit our friend. After many visits the light dawned upon his soul. As he found the Saviour for himself, God's word became his delight, and the dark cloud of hate and unbelief rolled away. Reading occupied his spare time in the evenings, and many a book throwing light on the errors of Romanism was eagerly read. Dr. Blakeney never had a more sincere admirer than this assistant clerk of the Union.

Very soon fresh developments took place. When the light shines people see it. Bitterness can be secretly nursed, but the joy of the soul finds expression. Our friend began to speak of his new experience. And as he bore his testimony to the Truth, thereby exposing the hollow pretensions of the Church which had failed to satisfy him, fresh clouds arose on the horizon. In the ardour of his first love he resolved to throw in his lot with the little local company of Protestants. They had to beg him not to identify himself with them openly, for such a course would have intensified the opposition and his revolt might have been crushed in its early days. Those who have never lived in a Roman Catholic country have no conception of the terror which the Church is able to inspire. It was not long before the priest heard of the change in our friend, and this was the signal for further action. One day he called at the Workhouse. "I hear", he said, "that you have been taking and reading Protestant books. What books are you reading?" "You", said the assistant clerk, "left me alone for three years and never asked if I had a soul, although you knew that I went nowhere. Now that I have found peace you come for information. I shall give you none. It is my concern what books I read". The priest went away in hot displeasure; and, knowing that he could rely on a good many supporters in his hostility, he visited our friend's house and proceeded to burn his books. While he was engaged in the work of arson the owner of the books arrived on the scene and began to remonstrate with him. The mother and sister in the home, terrified, besought the son not to touch "the Lord's anointed". But he ejected his reverence, and they both tumbled in the roadway over the step of the cottage. The priest summoned our friend. A packed bench of magistrates listened to an extraordinary tale of woe. The priest's evidence, corroborated by the terrified mother and sister, was to the effect that he was ministering spiritual comfort to the older woman when her son came in "like a raging lion", laid violent hands upon him, and flung him out of the door. It looked as if a sentence of six months' imprisonment could be the only possible result of the trial, but at this juncture the agonised mother called out,

The Labour Conference

The Labour Party's Annual Conference has come and gone. The new policy document adopted by the conference indicates a move to the left. Many will be reminded of the 1969 documents and the great move to the left at that time. The 'seventies we were told, were going to be socialist. They were not. The Labour Party leaders would claim that there is more support for socialism now, a decade later. This is probably true. It is not as easy today to whip up red scares, and people are better informed. The more intelligent must also be questioning the much vaunted free enterprise system, supported by the three parliamentary parties, which has been visibly crumbling as the country sinks deeper into the recession. And there are no Arab oil sheiks to blame this time. The country is being run into the ground by knackers and gombeen men for their own profit, and while the workers and the poor scrape for a living, the rich are creaming off the fat.

The policy document is to the left on at least two important issues - banking and building land. The party would now nationalise the banks and bring controls to bear on the price of building land. In a country where the banks make profits of increasing millions each year and where the prices of houses are beyond the reach of even middle class couples, the new departure could be seen as pragmatic rather than revolutionary.

It is a measure of the innate conservatism of the country that there has not been a demand to tackle these issues long before now. The Irish seem to have an infinite capacity for allowing themselves to be ripped off provided it is done legally. A country with a real socialist opposition would have had to curb the blatant and arrogant discrimination in favour of the rich which is so much a part of our society.

The Labour Party has again temporarily discovered that the country can't in the long term afford three con-

servative parties. They have everything to lose by not taking up some kind of an ideological position, distancing themselves from Fine Gael. Also, at a time when because of the economic situation there should be a dramatic increase in membership, they have not found themselves swamped with applications to join the party.

On the other side of Gardiner Place, S.F.W.P. would gladly and gaily undermine Labour and seduce prospective members. So, there is nothing much else to do but go through the motions of moving left.

The main problem for the Labour Party is a credibility one. Many people don't believe Labour is a party at all, just a mutual benefit society for a select number of T.D.s., and certainly cannot see this group of 'decent little men' (as Sean Lemass once called them) leading the country to socialism.

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"Ph! what have you done? You have made me perjure myself". The resident magistrate heard the remark, and allowed the poor woman to retract her former evidence. The case was dismissed. The assistant clerk left the Court with his eyes more widely open to the real character of the Church which claims Divine prerogatives.

Shortly afterwards he was attacked on his way home by a tramp. The tramp, however, received more than he bargained for; and then had the temerity to sue his intended victim for assault in the Petty Sessions Court. This case was also dismissed.

Some little time elapsed, and the R.C. dispensary doctor came to present his accounts. When they were duly certified he said to the assistant clerk, "You seem all right". "So I am", was the reply. Then was unfolded a tale which showed that the priest had not yet shot his last bolt, a tale which freeborn Englishmen would scarcely credit, but which is only too horribly true. The distracted mother and daughter had been terrorised into lodging an information that this rebel to Mother Church was a dangerous lunatic. The priest expected the doctor to confirm the finding. It was to be done on the next day. Our friend expostulated in vain. When he threatened to report to the Local Government Board, it was no use. The doctor naively admitted he was "between the devil and the deep sea". Ruin stared him in the face either way, but he averred he would risk the Local Government Board and

pin his faith to the priest. From a worldly point of view he was perfectly right, for men who are faithful to their conscience get little help from flabby officialdom in Ireland. But the doctor was a kind-hearted man and not evilly disposed towards our friend, so he said, "Look here! take my advice and clear out. Don't you know he will get you in the end? Get away out of the place altogether".

It was not the first time that the pressure of priestly malignity prevailed. Nor was it the first time that a man, for reading the Bible and giving his heart to God, became a homeless wanderer in Ireland. Homeless, yet not friendless; for God stood by him and caused the hardship to lead to good results. He found work in Dublin and was able to breathe freely once more. Eventually he became an Irish colporteur, and did yeoman service up and down his native land, selling the Scriptures and recommending the Word of Life to all and sundry. After sixteen years' faithful service in this work he became connected with Christian work amongst sailors. We pray that God's richest blessing may rest upon him as he seeks to commend, by precept and example, the Gospel of God's saving grace to those who "go down to the sea in ships". It is a cause of rejoicing to the Irish Church Missions that its branch in Limerick was instrumental in bringing light to one who has proved himself a valiant servant of the Cross.

THE CORPORATION

by Michael Hogan

FROM SHAWN-A-SCOOB NUMBER 11

Moll's Ride

Now to return to gallant Shawn—
Scarce had the day began to dawn,
When from the shadows of her room
Moll issued forth in full costume,
And as she bustled thro' the hall,
Settled her silks and streamed her shawl,
She viewed herself from side to side,
Swayed back and forward, buoyed with pride,
Like a balloon that nods and bends
Before the giddy thing ascends.
The Zodiac's ring, from sign to sign,
Was lesser than her crinoline,
As crushing thro' the parlour door
She swept in covering half the floor.
Her silken train behind her trailed,
Half by the open door concealed;
Like the long wake a schooner leaves
Behind her when she breaks the waves.
Shawn at the parlour window stood,
In stony contemplative mood,
Reading a letter from the Castle,
And did not mind his lady's bustle,
Till she, impatient, in his ear,
Sung out in accents sharp and clear.
"Shawn, are you ready for the *dhrive!*
Or did the carriage yet arrive?"
Shawn, turning to his spouse, replied,
"Mary, you speak quite Englified;
I'm proud your accent is fine-drawn,
But, heavens, drop that vulgar Shawn!"
"Now, 'pon my honour!;" Moll rejoined,
"Shawn, your the wisest of mankind,
But where's the carriage? man alive!
I'll hear of nothing but the *dhrive!*"
Shawn rang the bell — a servant came—
He spoke and frowned, Moll did the same—
"Haste, tell the coachman, underling,
My carriage to the door to bring!"
The servant on his mission sped,
And instantly the coachman led,
In glittering *eclat* to the door,
A pompous harnessed coach-and-four.
The proud pair entered, and sat down,
"Fellow," said Shawn, "drive round the town;
Go on." No sooner said than done,
Off with the coursers in quick run;

PART FIVE

Gently at half their speed, yet fleet,
They seemed to sail along the street,
Till the Plutonian shape and size
Of Bogstick's weed-sign met their eyes;
With bristling tail and starting ear,
Each restive steed began to rear,
And charging with one mad consent
Off thro' the town like devils they went,
Tantarara—off—away—
Across the bridge and down the quay:
In vain, with mighty tug and strain,
The driver bore upon the rein;
Wild as a whirlwind, and as strong,
They thundered thro' the street along.
Moll's head-dress in the mire was tost,
And Shawn's imperious hat was lost;
While from a thousand throats rung out
A hoarse promiseuous guttural shout;
"Ho, stop the coursers!" but the cry
Made the mad steeds the faster fly:
And in their headlong maniac route
Meat-stands and stalls were kicked about.
Over Baal's Bridge, in fierce affright,
The horses urged their stormy flight;
And up the dingy Irishtown,
Foaming with wrath they thundered on.
Tables and tubs — all things that lay—
Were kicked to atoms in their way;
While the whole street tumultuous grew
Into one defening pillalue.
Viragos yelled and bullies swore,
Dogs chorused in the wild furor;
The herring women roared and raved
Over their barrels smashed and staved;
The frantic widow cut a rig,
Screaming about her murdered pig;
And o'er her husband's tattered stall
The cobbler's wife began to bawl.
The steeds still kelter-skelter flew,
No stay, no check their madness knew,
Moll thought they only drove in style,
And looked around her with a smile.
"Now, 'pon my honour, Shawn! she cried,
That's something like a decent ride!"
"Bad luck to you!" responded Shawn,
My ribs are broke, my breath is gone;

Ho! coachman, pull the left-hand rein,
 And turn the chargers down yon lane,
 There their mad speed may find a check,
 Before we get a broken neck!"

Furiously down the stinking lane,
 Towards the hotel of Sir Dhudeen,
 The headlong coursers foamed and leapt,
 And o'er the broken pavement swept.
 Just then the knight of pipes and pints
 Was issuing forth to give his joints
 Exercise in a morning trot,
 Tailways about his favourite spot;
 But when he saw in swift approach
 Shawn's carriage like the Headless Coach,
 His novel horsemanship to prove,
 A— ways against the steeds he drove:
 The wondering steeds astonished saw
 A full reverse of riding law;
 And wheeling towards the Knight's hotel,
 They neighed a laugh, and down they fell.
 "Bless you!" said Shawn, "Curse you," said Moll,
 "Why did you stop the steeds at all?
 Of my fine dhrive I've been deprived
 By your curst riding tail-contrived!"

Now home the hopeful pair advanced—
 Moll, with her *dhrive* felt most enhanced;
Thona mon dhoul! Shawn: man alive!
 When will we have another dhrive?"

"Curse on your tongue!" growled Shawn, "you rogue!

When will you leave the vulgar brogue?
 There's some whose nature, like the swine,
 The devil himself cannot refine;
 Now, Madam, let me hear no more—
 I thought you *wor* advised before!"

When they arrived at the hall door,
 A shivering group of wretches poor;
 Beggars and brats stood waiting there,
 And asked for alms with praise and prayer.
 "God bless yer honour's sowl for evir,
 And may the Lord above delivir
 You and your lady snug and warm,
 And keep ye always from all harm!
 Something, yer honour, for the poor
 Waiting these two hours at yer door.
 God bless yer Ladyship's purty mouth,
 Och, she's a darling out-and-out!"

Shawn waved his hand in wrath, and frowned,
 Turned on the steps, and gazed around,
 And called a peeler in hot haste
 The begging progeny to arrest.
 Policeman, take those vagrants up,
 And send them to the jail to sup;
 "Oh! the *mondacious* things," said Moll,
 They should not be let out at all!"

Suddenly, like a flock of stare,
 The beggars scampered here and there;
 But as the ragged tribe dispersed,
 Their prayers and praises were reversed.

Socialists Against Nationalism

Socialists Against Nationalism is a pressure group which exists to oppose nationalism and promote class politics in the Republic of Ireland.

The group believes that the clear wish of the majority of people in Northern Ireland to remain citizens of the United Kingdom must be respected. Two large scale military campaigns and numerous political campaigns, designed to overcome Ulster unionism, have failed. Their only results have been to worsen the position of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland, who were treated as a fifth column of Southern anti-partitionism; to disrupt any possibility of united working class politics in the Republic; to cause thousands of futile injuries and deaths and at times to present the threat of a full scale civil war.

The group declares that socialists must accept the present state boundaries in Ireland as a basis for developing socialist politics. The call for a 32 county Socialist Republic is nothing more than the old nationalism newly dressed in a socialist guise.

The group opposes the demand for the British Government to declare its intention to withdraw from Northern Ireland. It also opposes the demand for what amounts to the same thing, withdrawal by the British Government of its guarantee that the constitutional status of Northern Ireland cannot be changed without the consent of a majority there.

The group demands that the Government of the Republic should recognise as legitimate, the present constitutional status of Northern Ireland. To this end it demands that Articles 2

and 3 of the Republic's Constitution, which lays claim to Northern Ireland's territory, be dropped. This is clearly required by the Helsinki Agreement, which was signed by the Republic in 1975.

Nationalism is invariably the ideology of the national ruling class. It unites capitalist and worker in common enmity to other peoples and obscures the conflict between their own class interests. De Valera's slogan succinctly expresses the effect that nationalism has had in the Republic: "Labour must wait."

Overcoming nationalism in the working class movement means removing a powerful obstacle to socialist politics and overall working class development. The struggle for full employment, for a proper system of health and social welfare and for increased working class power in society generally, could then proceed without fear of ever again being sidetracked into sterile anti-partitionism.

Membership is open to all those who support the group's aims and pay a yearly subscription of £2, (non-earners £1). Organisations may affiliate by paying a yearly subscription of £10.

Write letters to local and national newspapers in support of these policies; put forward resolutions in unions, at Branch and if possible at Annual Conference level, demanding the repeal of Articles 2 and 3 of the Republic's Constitution; organise public meetings of Socialists Against Nationalism; organise public debates with socialists and others who still hold the traditional nationalist viewpoint.

A CARDINAL CRIME

Nobody was supposed to say what Gerry Fitt said. Nobody was supposed even to dream of saying it. Cardinal O Fiaich is in sympathy with the political objectives of the IRA, the refore he cannot function as a mediator between H-Block protestors and the British Government. The effect of his involvement, from the moment he made his incessantly-quoted comparison with the sewers of Calcutta, has not been to defuse the protest, but the very opposite: to aggravate the protest. And this is about as open as an open secret can be. Nevertheless, it was supposed to be a secret.

Cardinal O Fiaich wants to be a politician while having the reputation of being above politics. He want to be a politician who is universally admitted to have pastoral and humanitarian motives and no political motives. Who could be so un-sporting as to suggest that he can't have his cake and eat it? A Cardinal should have that privilege, shouldn't he?

The editor of the *Irish Press* would have taken no notice if Gerry Fitt had attacked the Provos, and little notice if he had attacked the SDLP. But when he attacked O Fiaich, that was too much for Tim Pat Coogan. In one of his most venomous editorials he damed Fitt as a West Brit who had stooped so low as "to attack his own people". To attack anyone else may be politics, but to attack the Cardinal is treason.

Southern sympathy for the H-Block men is noticeable for its absence. This is not for want of trying. The Church made the H-Block issue respectable. It is being suggested of late that the H-Block men are innocent (Sile de Valera and Fr. Brian Darcy of the *Sunday World*) even though this is not claimed by the H-Block men themselves. The H-Block campaign has even had some success in getting people to overlook the fact that the dirty protest is self-inflicted. If you say often enough that the prisoners are being kept "In appalling conditions" just as with advertising, it begins to have some effect.

Given all the effort that has gone into the campaign the lack of Southern response is noteworthy but at this stage, not surprising. It is conceivable that a humanitarian case could be made to call on a government not to carry out a sentence of execution on someone. A "humanitarian" plea on behalf of people who will starve themselves to death if they don't get political status is obviously less emotive.

On the face of it, the H-Block men could be seen to have some case. One can argue purely formally that special events should lead to special status (even though no such claim is made for Southern prisoners convicted by the Special Criminal Court) but then one would have to look at why the special courts exist in the first place. When it is realised that the H-Block men are soldiers who would have no hesitation with continuing their war if they weren't locked up, one has to ask how seriously the "humanitarian" appeals are to be taken. Certainly the Provos don't take those appeals seriously even though they are aware of their propaganda value when they come from the right quarters.

In itself, the question of special status is of no importance. There are already "special category" prisoners who are left over from before 1976, and this has little effect one way or another. One is reminded of the arguments that used to imply that somehow the Provos would call off the war if only internment was ended. Likewise, it is argued now that more improvement will come about if the hunger strikers are conceded to. The Provos have always been accompanied by a self-appointed nationalist chorus that decrees how the Provos will escalate/de-escalate the war according to what particular demands

are given in to (the most pathetic example of this recently is the churchman who believed he could determine whether or not the North/South electricity link would be allowed to be re-connected).

In the North the H-Block issue is a highly divisive one - and Cardinal O Fiaich above all people must be blamed for this, having turned it into a "Catholic" cause. The British government cannot make any concession without being attacked by the whole Protestant population, and against the background of the Provos border campaign of recent months this is not surprising. The last British government must also take much of the blame for having removed special category status for no good reason. The present British government is also to blame - it could call for a permanent Provo ceasefire in return for conceding special status (a deal that the "humanitarian" lobby would find it difficult to find a way out of) but the British government is precluded from doing this because it is still trying to keep up the fiction that the Provos are ordinary criminals who cannot be negotiated with.

The Southern indifference to the H-Block protest, however, is the best possible contribution that can be made. The fiction that the South will step in to back up the Northern Catholic community in its attempt to defeat unionism has been all-powerful in keeping Northern Ireland stuck into the old sectarian moulds, and has been responsible for encouraging the H-Block men into their last desperate effort. That fiction is now being put to the test and is proved to be without substance. Haughey's victory over Blaney in Donegal is a case in point. A serious 'H-Block vote' would have gone to Blaney. Instead people voted for the fake Republicanism of Fianna Fail - the right noises from Sile de Valera but not a genuine commitment by the government.

This state of sham republicanism in the South is now obviously the basis for functional opportunist politics. It is up to those who want to build progressive politics to expose this charade for what it is, for the benefit of those who haven't already seen that nationalist politics are at a dead end.

(Reprinted from *Comment*).

SCRAP ARTICLES—2 & 3

We believe: That the clear wish of the majority of people in Northern Ireland to remain citizens of the United Kingdom must be respected.

We declare: That socialists must accept the present state boundaries in Ireland as a basis for developing socialist politics. The call for a 32-county socialist Republic is nothing more than the old nationalism newly dressed in a socialist guise.

We oppose: The demand for the British Government to declare its intention to withdraw from Northern Ireland.

We demand: That the Government of the Republic should recognise as legitimate the present constitutional status of Northern Ireland. To this end we demand that Articles 2 and 3 of the Republic's Constitution, which lays claim to Northern Ireland's territory, be dropped. This is clearly required by the Helsinki Agreement, which was signed by the Republic in 1975.

Membership: Membership is open to all those who support our aims.

Contact: 33 Greenhill Road, Garryowen, Limerick.